

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO



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# WAR IN NEW GUINEA

OFFICIAL WAR PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE BATTLE FOR AUSTRALIA



*Published by Department of Information*

**DEDICATED**

**TO THE MEN WHO DROVE THE JAPS FROM PAPUA**

**AND PUBLISHED**

**SO THAT THE REST OF AUSTRALIA**

**CAN SEE HOW THEY DID IT**

*Photographs by*

**THE DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION**

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★The cover picture shows Cpl. F. R. Smith, of Queensland, with his tommy gun near Gona front line.

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**Xmas Day at Buna . . . 1942.** A blinded Digger at Buna gropes his way to aid with the gentle guidance of a Papuan boy. An emergency field dressing covers the wounds in his eyes.

# WAR IN NEW GUINEA

SINGAPORE, Java, Sumatra had fallen. Then Rabaul. For Australia, 1942 broke to a bloody dawn. The vaulted umbrella of islands had folded up, the outside ring of protection had gone—except for Port Moresby, arid, half-garrisoned, half-prepared. March, and the Japanese hands, ever reaching forward, fell on Lae and Salamaua, just “over the mountains.” Thumbs scoured out new airfields, transports brought in troops, supplies. Enemy aircraft filled the skies over Moresby, day after day, night after night. But the Japanese halted, secure in their thoughts that “to-morrow would do.” But the to-morrows were stirring with new life, with iron in their blood and steel in their hearts. In a time when hope fluttered vainly, miracles happened. The miracles were small groups of men in fighter planes who stemmed the forward rush of the Nipponese airmen. The planes were made in the factories of America and Australia. They fell from hands covered with oil and grease.

The world looked at New Guinea. Strategists drew lines from Port Moresby to the mainland. “If it fell . . . this will happen—the bombing of Australian cities, women, children, industries . . .”

But it did not happen. That is the story of the men of New Guinea. The Jap came and was halted. He was pushed back. He left in the mud and slush his best fighting men. Port Moresby did not fall. Instead of a defensive post, a stooge to take the blows from a champion fighter, it became a fighting base. From it, giant planes streaked towards the Japanese. From it, lean men, with confidence in their hearts and courage in their eyes, went across the hell of the Owen Stanley Ranges. They met the Jap—the confident, plump, egotistical brown man—and they beat him.

The story of the shocking conditions, the incredible hardships and the sheer guts shown by our men cannot be completely told in photographs nor can it be described adequately in writing. It can be better understood perhaps when all realise that the fight for Papua is now recognised as one of the toughest campaigns in all military history.

To combat the Japanese, soldiers climbed slippery, precipitous mountain tracks on hands and knees—forced their way through dense jungle—waded knee-deep in mud—desperately weary, tried to sleep on sodden ground under constant tropical downpour.

At one stage those in contact with the enemy lit no fires, had no warm food, nor took off a single piece of clothing for four weeks. When finally able to have a spell their socks, and in some cases their boots, had to be cut from their feet—water-sodden skin was torn away with socks—feet left raw.

Many wounded men walked for days to medical aid; those who couldn't walk were carried on rough bush stretchers by native Fuzzy Wuzzies. Sometimes it took ten natives to carry one wounded soldier over this terrible country.

Complete lack of roads was the most difficult problem in the campaign; without roads it appeared impossible to supply our troops. This great problem was finally overcome by employing several thousand natives as carriers; and with huge transport planes dropping supplies from the air.

North of the Owen Stanleys the Japs were in considerable force. Coolies had been brought to carry their supplies across the roadless country.

Following weeks of dreadful fighting the Japs were pushed back over the Owen Stanleys—Moresby was saved—Kokoda Airfield recaptured. Our supply problem was simplified. Big planes were now able to land on the northern side of the ranges with stores which could not be safely dropped from the air. Wounded men were flown out—within a few hours were getting attention in Moresby's hospitals. Many lives were saved and the frightful trip back over the Owen Stanley Track was a thing of the past.

As it was impossible to march sufficient troops over the ranges to drive the Japs from Papua, other means of transport were investigated. The ranges were thoroughly explored for routes by which roads could be rapidly built—but without success. The plan to march troops up the coast from Milne Bay was impracticable because of the impassable swamp country. The plan of transporting troops by plane to the North Coast was, at first, reckoned limited, as the landing fields were soft with incessant rain and heavy aircraft bog easily, but following a successful experimental flight the High Command decided to fly reinforcement troops over the ranges and land them to the south of Buna on the north coast of Papua. These troops were mainly Americans.

About the same time, the Australians fighting on the Kokoda Trail won a complete victory over the Japs at Gorari, a village about 30 miles from the north coast. Brilliant strategy and brave men annihilated practically the whole of the enemy force. More than one thousand Japs were killed. The few lucky enough to escape the Gorari trap fled to the coast, joining up with the Jap garrisons who waited there within strongly constructed, well-hidden defences. However, against these coastal fortresses at Gona, Buna and Sanananda the Allies now attacked.

The campaign over the ranges had been tough, but here on the coast were extra hardships. Men fought by day in steamy, reeking swamps, beneath a burning equatorial sun and lay at night, soaked to the skin by the regular tropical downpour, often hungry and always weary, with death lurking behind every leaf and log. The Jap, with the cunning of an animal, had burrowed into the earth and camouflaged his whereabouts with jungle.

Malaria and Typhus Fever broke out amongst the troops. Strong men who had fought so valiantly across the ranges crumbled as these dread diseases took their toll—it was heart-breaking when victory was so close—some fought on—ill with fever. One, a Company Commander with his temperature at 105°, led his men in counter-attack against the enemy—when the Japs were beaten back he collapsed with a temperature of 106.6°.

Despite all difficulties our forces closed relentlessly in, and the Japs who would not surrender were killed.

The doomed Jap garrisons of Papua had waited in vain for the reinforcements their Emperor had promised—but these never arrived—the Allied Airforce had seen to that, as they sunk ship after ship.

With the dawn of 1943, Sanananda, last of the Jap garrisons, fell. The Japanese had been driven from Papua and the first stage of the Allied offensive against the Japanese marauders successfully completed.

**General MacArthur**, Supreme  
Commander, South-West  
Pacific, and  
**General Sir Thomas Blamey**,  
Commander, Allied Land Forces,  
who conducted the successful  
campaign in Papua.



# The Fuzzy-wuzzy Angels with the fuzzy-wuzzy hair . . .

**To Carry in Supplies and Carry out the Wounded**, thousands of Papuan boys were recruited for the army by the New Guinea Administrative Officers, and, in the words of General Vasey . . . "Without these 'boys' we could not have advanced beyond a few miles into the Owen Stanleys, let alone across them. The 'boys' were to us what the motor transport units are to the Desert Campaigns." It is ironical that merely a few months ago most of the Diggers who fought in Papua thought of these natives as head-hunters and cannibals, but what they think of them now is clearly expressed in the simple little poem on the next page written by a Sapper on the Kokoda trail.







Many a mother in Australia, when the busy day is done,  
Sends a prayer to the Almighty, for the keeping of her son;  
Asking that an angel guide him, and to bring him safely back—  
Now we see those prayers are answered, on the Owen Stanley track.

Though they haven't any haloes, only holes slashed through their ears,  
And their faces marked with tattoos and with scratch pins in their hair,  
Bringing back the badly wounded, just as steady as a horse,  
Using leaves to keep the rain off, and as gentle as a nurse,  
Slow and careful in bad places on the awful mountain track,  
And the look upon their faces makes us think that Christ was black.

Not a move to hurt the wounded, as they treat him like a saint;  
It's a picture worth recording, that an artist's yet to paint;  
Many a lad will see his mother, and the husbands see their wives,  
Just because the Fuzzy-wuzzies carried them to save their lives,  
From mortar or machine-gun fire or a chance surprise attack,  
To safety and the care of doctors at the bottom of the track.

May the mothers in Australia, when they offer up a prayer,  
Mention these impromptu angels with the fuzzy-wuzzy hair.



★ TO PETE TURNBULL.

*Silent and calm  
Stands a lonely palm,  
That looks  
Like a shipwrecked mast;  
For it marks the place  
Where a flying Ace  
And his plane  
Are at rest at last.*

*The plane lies there,  
With its heart torn bare,  
But the palm  
Will guard it well;  
For though years may go  
It remains to show  
The place  
Where Turnbull fell.*

**A Tribute to the Allied Airmen in New Guinea** is expressed in the poem written by one of his ground crew when Squadron-Leader Turnbull, D.F.C., of Glen Innes, N.S.W., crashed while strafing a Jap tank at Milne Bay.

Allied airmen played a major part in driving the Japs from Papua. They strafed the Japs out of Milne Bay. They fed the army as it fought its way from Moresby to Buna, landing on makeshift airstrips or skimming the treetops dropping supplies to the troops on the jungle tracks. They piloted troop-laden transport planes across the mountains and brought back the wounded. They flew in equipment, field guns and ammunition and, whenever practicable, bombed the Japs. To make all this possible, the fighter pilots kept up a ceaseless patrol high above the transports and bombers, driving the supposedly invincible Zeros from the sky.

These are some of the fighter pilots who drove the Japs from the New Guinea sky. They are—Back row: S/L Les Jackson, F/L Lex Winton, F/L Primrose, F/O George West, F/O Jack Pettett, Sgt. Pilot Bob Crawford, F/O Allan Whitters, F/O Noel Todd. Front row: F/O Bruce Watson, F/L "Cockey" Brereton, F/L Johnny Piper, F/O Peter Masters, F/O Dick Holt.



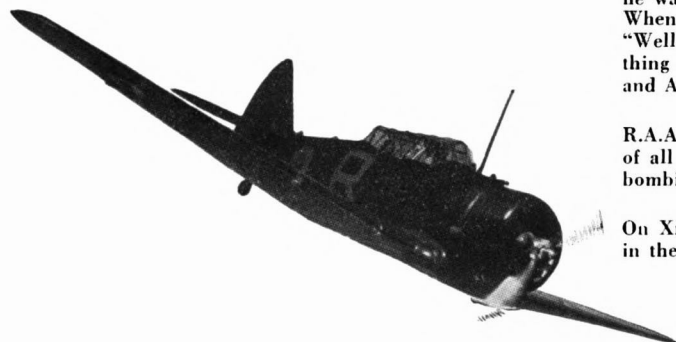


# WIRRAWAY SHOOTS DOWN ZERO!

On reconnaissance over Gona in a Wirraway, Sgt-Obsvr Les Coulson shouted excitedly as he spotted a plane to one side and below, "HELL, IT'S A ZERO." Before he had finished speaking he was thrown against the side of the cockpit as the pilot, P.O. Jack Archer, sent the Wirraway into a dive straight at the Jap. Archer commenced firing at 200 yards and kept his finger on the trigger until he pulled away into a steep turn 50 yards from the Jap. Looking back over his shoulder, he was just in time to see the Zero explode as it crashed into the sea. When asked how it felt attacking a Zero in a Wirraway, Archer replied, "Well, I don't know, as I didn't have time to think about it. The main thing is, I was lucky enough to get him in the first burst." Coulson and Archer are both Melbourne men.

R.A.A.F. pilots, flying Wirraway training planes, won the admiration of all for the work that they did, artillery observing, low level strafing, bombing, and general reconnaissance in New Guinea.

On Xmas Eve a pilot from the Wirraway Squadron flew over the boys in the Buna front line and dropped bundles of cigarettes by parachute.





**Warriors with a Sense of Humour,** these Australians have just helped to bury some of the thousand odd Japs killed at Gorari. In the foreground Jap helmets mark a common grave. These are typical of the men who drove the Japs back over the Owen Stanleys and down to the coast—against mountain guns and mortars they fought with bayonets and grenades in a series of terrific charges and much hand-to-hand fighting. They are Cpl. R. V. Twomey, Ptes. R. C. Smith, P. Serone, S. H. Griffiths, V. W. Russell and A. McGoldrick, all from N.S.W.



**A Wounded Man Collapses** on reaching this dressing station, which is on the track between the Gona front and the Popendetta airfield. The casualties were flown out from here to Port Moresby. It took wounded men four or five hours to trudge from Gona to this place, which became known as Half-Way House.



**The Y.M.C.A. and the Salvation Army** were with the troops wherever they went. Four Australians, straight from the front line, enjoy French coffee out of mugs improvised from discarded American pork and bean cans. The coffee was taken from a captured Syrian fort and brought to New Guinea by the Salvation Army, who supplied it steaming hot to the men. Left to right: Ptes. R. D. Miller, O. Nagle, L. G. Braund, of N.S.W., and H. Johansen, of Queensland.





↑ **Engineers Build a Bridge** across a stream at Kokoda, over which it was intended to transport supplies per jeeps, to the advancing troops. This plan was later abandoned, owing to the impossible country and our rapid advance. The jeeps were flown across the Ranges on to the Kokoda airfield, and could not cross the light footbridge above, built previously by the rubber planters.

← **"Iorabaiwa Joe"** is the best-known parrot in New Guinea. Corporal J. C. McNicol rescued him from natives, who had plucked his feathers to dress their hair. He travelled across the Owen Stanleys on McNicol's shoulder, happily munching army biscuits.

↓ **A Digger on a "Flying Fox"** is pulled across the Kumusi River at Wairopi.





**To Conquer the Raging Kumusi River at Wairopi,** engineers worked and fought the river for three days, building crossings such as this. In the foreground engineers are working on one of several "flying foxes" built to speed up the advance; troops and equipment moved on, but lives were lost in the hazardous crossing. In the top right of the picture can be seen part of the famous Wairopi Bridge, which was destroyed by Allied airmen to impede the retreat of the Japs . . . it was near here that Jap General Horii, G.O.C. Papua, was drowned with one of his staff officers and others while attempting to cross the river by raft. The origin of the name Wairopi is from the native attempt to say "wire rope bridge."



**"This is the Road to Buna."** After a tough struggle across the Owen Stanleys, weary troops plod on in the advance from Kokoda to Buna. They were bitter with the realisation that the so-called motor road was nothing but a muddy morass. Even the Japs had abandoned their bicycles. This part of the track is near Oivi.

**Ambulance Plane.** Where possible, wounded were flown out of the forward areas. Here is a wounded man, Pte. F. A. Mathews, being given a drink by a native while waiting his turn to go. Banana leaves shield him from the sun. With him is Pte. D. C. Pride (N.S.W.). On the right, Pte. J. W. Clont (N.S.W.) is gently lifted aboard the plane. The pilot, an American, is S/Sgt. N. D. Maxwell.







**Waltzing Matilda, but not Jolly Swagmen.** A couple of mud-bedraggled Diggers coming up the track through the Kunai grass near Gona front. Note that the well-dressed man on the track carries a stick to keep his balance, a ground sheet to keep the rain off, a billy can



**Badly Hit by Mortar Shrapnel** in the head, thigh and arm, a Digger has rough field dressings applied by his mates as they crouch in the tall Kunai grass near the Gona front line. The agonies of the wounded were increased by the torturing blast of the Papuan sun. Gona was truly blood, sweat, toil and tears. The men preferred the comfort of their battered felt hats to the safety of their heavy tin ones.

**THESE ARE THE MEN WHO BATTLE FOR AUSTRALIA.** The New Guinea campaign became a sort of personal duel between the clerk from Sydney and the fatalistic tough Jap soldier. A man forgot his superficial emotions and was brave naturally. He grew rough and hardened; his one thought to go on and "get stuck into the Japs and get this so-and-so war over."

The group on the next page, typical of all, shows Captain Kevin Power and the remnants of his company after they had fought their way across New Guinea to the North Coast, where they ran the Japs to earth at Gona. They fought a hundred battles against Japs and heat, fever and thirst, hunger and want of sleep, all in a stinking tidal swamp that simmered by day under an equatorial sun and soaked men at night when the water rose and fell from the regular tropical deluge.



**A Determined Digger**, with his tommy-gun, squats in a shallow front line trench at Gona. By day the sun broiled him, and at night he lay and tried to sleep in the torrential rain that filled his trench.



**Nights of Fever** and days of thirst made the muddy, lukewarm ditch water of the Gona swamps drinkable.







**Two Hundred Yards from No Man's Land,** wounded Australians lie on crude bush stretchers at an advanced Sanananda dressing station. This scene is typical of every action; look into it carefully and see its story of suffering. Men in pain lie quietly and wait their turn for attention, while three wounded youngsters, those on the page opposite, look around for somewhere to rest.

This car was captured by the Japs in Malaya, and brought to New Guinea, where it was recaptured by the Australians. They made effective repairs, cut the back out, and adapted it to useful service as an ambulance at Sanananda.

Lieutenant Taylor crawled in after eight hellish days lying in a water-filled bomb crater so close to the Japs that he could hear them talking. He was seriously wounded in four places and apparently considered dead by the enemy.





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"A sight I shall never forget was of three battle-weary, wounded young Australians suddenly materialising from the thick jungle. All were wounded, each supporting the other. Cigarettes dangled carelessly from their blood-stained faces, and their tin hats were at a cocky angle. One, a 20-year-old youth, the baby of his platoon, cracked a wide grin. The Japs had put a bullet through his thigh, and another had wounded him in the head—but he was still grinning when I left. From behind that screen of trees came the shattering bark of mortars, the ping of snipers' bullets, the heavy chatter of machine-guns. And you knew that other young Australians were doing what these had done—gun in hand, chin thrust forward, moving slowly against these Japanese positions, as slowly as in a pleasure stroll, because it was impossible to charge through the tangled undergrowth."

*Extract of message from F. C. Folkard, a War Correspondent in New Guinea.*

The names of these young militia soldiers from New South Wales are: Privates W. H. Walker, K. E. Beckmann, and B. R. Chadwick.





**With Wounds Dressed by Australians,** dejected Japs sit on bags of rice and wait to be escorted to the dressing station at Gona. The photographer actually witnessed the Digger at the top of the picture pick up the Jap in the centre and carry him on his back to the dressing station, where, in the opposite picture, he can be seen sitting brooding, while the Digger momentarily overcomes his bitterness and acts the Good Samaritan.

Captured Jap rice being moved by a quartermaster and his carriers to a battalion field kitchen. Jap rice was the staple part of the men's diet during the north coast campaign.



**"What about taking our pictures for Mum?"**

was the request from these youthful Chapman brothers to the photographer; the boys got their picture. They hail from South Australia.





**What is Bitterness?** A few moments earlier this Digger and his mates were fighting like fiends in the final thrust that drove the Japs out of Gona. He had cursed the "yellow sons of bitches" who had killed his coppers. And now, strange as it may seem, he stoops and gently gives water to a badly wounded Jap, whose fingers touch his in silent gratitude.

**PADRE A. E. BEGGIE PLANTS SIMPLE WOODEN CROSSES IN THE SAND TO MARK THE GRAVES OF GALLANT MEN WHO FELL AT GONA.**





**The Last Japs Killed at Gona.** Five were surprised trying to escape through the tall grass. One threw his bayonet-fitted rifle spear-fashion at the nearest Australian, who dodged and retaliated with grenades. He got the five. The Japs carried billies of rice and evidently intended to go "bush" until they could rejoin their forces.

**A Vickers crew reload** their "ammo" belts on the "morning after." The few remaining Japs in Gona made a desperate bid for freedom when they tried to break through our perimeter along the beach. When dawn came, 93 Japs lay dead on the sand. It is not known for certain who killed these men, but this Vickers crew was no more than 40 yards away, and this tommy-gunner was even closer. What do you think?



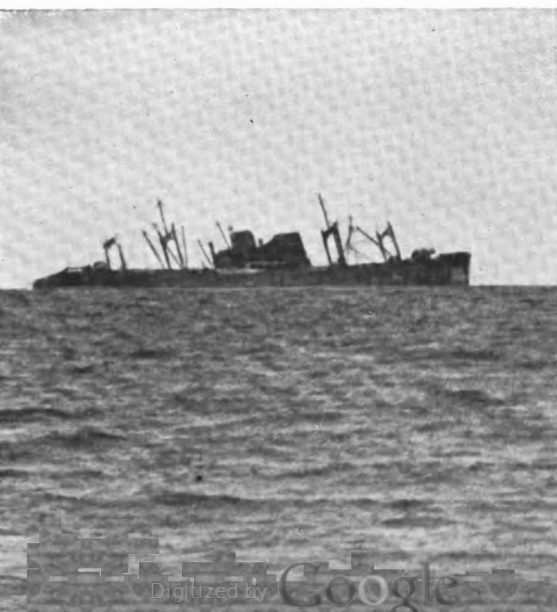
*The Tommy-gunner is Pte. Len Owens. In the Vickers crew are Cpl. W. L. Smith, Pte. C. R. McConville, Pte. J. R. Windsor, Pte. G. Sadlier, all of Western Australia.*





**An Australian Digs a Grave** for two of the Japs killed at Gona village. Not a pleasant sight, yet there is unconscious humour in the situation. The irresistible urge to watch a man digging a hole got the better of these soldiers, who stand and watch just as they might have done in any city street.

**This Battered Hulk, Ashore on the Coral Reef off Gona,** was suspected of being an enemy supply base, fed at night by subs. When Gona fell, a number of Japs bolted into the water, wearing lifebelts, and under the cover of falling darkness started to swim out to the wreck. Apparently their chance of being rescued was worth the two-mile swim through shark-infested waters, or perhaps they considered the sharks preferable to the Aussies.



# *The fall of Gona . . .*

**Surrounded by Dead Japs,** Australians rest after the final Battle for Gona. Under the tree in the background the scene on the opposite page was photographed.



**AUSTRALIANS REST . . .**



**JAPS LIE DEAD**





**Routing the Japs out of their Holes at Giropi Point.** The arrows indicate enemy pill-boxes being attacked, and at the moment this picture was taken the General Stuart tank was blazing straight down into the entrance of one. The tommy-gunner, crouched behind the tree on the left, is firing short bursts as the Japs show themselves ten yards away. The rifleman on the right picks off Japs in the same pill-box.

**A Two-inch Mortar Crew goes into Action** against Japs as they bolt from positions eighty to ninety yards away. The tank's 37 mm. gun has blasted them and they are retreating to a stronger defensive line two hundred yards further back. Note bullet-scarred palm tree in foreground.





**Infantry move in with the Tanks** as they assault the well-constructed Jap positions a few yards ahead. The men protect the tanks against attacks from fanatical Japs armed with Molotov cocktails or grenades. The Jap positions are momentarily hidden as dust and smoke rises from bursting tank shells.

**Stretcher-Bearers Rescue a Badly Wounded Man** while under fire from Japs ninety to hundred yards away. The Bren gunners indicated are blazing away at Japs who have just hit the man being carried to safety. A close-up of the Bren gunner in the centre firing from behind a stump can be seen on the next page.



**BUNA**



**Here is the Bren Gunner** with sweat pouring down his face as he fires at Japs one hundred yards ahead of the tank; his mate beside him shoots from the hip. Tucked in beside the tank is the two-inch mortar crew seen on the previous page. The men in front of the tank are fighting from the spot where the soldier in the

A Jap pill-box is stripped of its camouflage by Aussies. Bullet holes made by our men when attacking can be seen in the bottom log. Cold steel, used with plenty of "guts," routed the Japs out one by one from their solidly constructed fortifications.

Sgt. John Church makes quick check up of his 37 mm. tank-gun between fights amidst the coconut palms. These tanks used both high explosive and armour-piercing shells against the Jap pill-boxes.





## BATTLE-FIELD



last picture was wounded. The battle scene extending across these two pages stretches away to the right and shows tommy-gunners and riflemen crouched in the grass dodging Jap bullets. Against the palms in the background smoke rises from a three-inch mortar as it lobs its bombs over the heads of our men on to the Japs.

The infantry platoon commander climbs onto the back of an Aussie tank during the assault. In his hand can be seen a note which will be passed through a port in the turret. He was actually asking the tank crew to blast a troublesome pill-box to the right. Contact was made in this way.

A 3-in. mortar lobs bombs on Jap positions 250 yards away. Smoke from this mortar can be seen through the palms in the picture above.





**Many Australians who fell at Cape Endauidaire** owe their lives to American stretcher-bearers, who came and helped with our wounded. Here, an American soothes an injured man while his buddy quickly plugs the wounds, before they carry him to safety. CARRYING WOUNDED MATES, GRIM MEN OF THE AUSTRALIAN ARMoured DIVISION COME OUT OF THE BATTLE FOR BUNA AIRFIELD. . .





**Science in War.** American medical orderlies give a blood Plasma infusion to save the life of a comrade at Cape Endauidaire. The use of Plasma in battle areas is a recent medical achievement which will save the lives of countless men who might otherwise die from loss of blood or from shock and burns. Plasma is an amber-coloured fluid obtained from human blood after the red cells have been removed.

It is administered direct through a glass tube into the patient's blood stream, irrespective of his blood group. As it does not deteriorate quickly it can be carried right into the forward areas. In this case the Plasma used was prepared in America from blood given voluntarily to the Red Cross by millions of donors, but large quantities of a similar substance, serum, prepared by the Australian Red Cross, was used in the New Guinea campaign.

WALKING WOUNDED ON THEIR WAY FROM GORARI TO THE KOKODA DRESSING STATION. RIGHT: CPL. C. G. HARRIS CROSSES A CREEK.







**At the Main Dressing Station, Soputa,** a wounded Digger with a Jap bullet in his eye is carried into the operating theatre. The rainy season brought tropical deluges . . . and mud, from which there was no escape. The stretcher-bearers stagger to keep balance in the slop.

**WOUNDED MEN ARE BROUGHT FOOD AS THEY LIE ON BUSH STRETCHERS AND WAIT TO BE CARRIED DOWN THE TRACK BY FUZZY-WUZZIES.**





**Skilled Surgeons**, working under appalling conditions, remove the bullet. Mud is everywhere; equipment is scanty and improvised. The Medical Services did a magnificent job in New Guinea. Major T. Ackland operates; on the left is Col. F. K. Norris, A.D.M.S., and Lt.-Col. H. F. Hobson, C.O. of the dressing station.

**FIVE WOUNDED MEN . . . TO BE FLOWN TO PORT MORESBY . . . ARE TRANSPORTED TO AN AIRFIELD ON AN AMERICAN-DRIVEN JEEP.**



# BATTLE FOR BUNA . . .

This Vickers crew was assigned the dangerous job of clearing Jap snipers from the treetops in the coconut plantation opposite. These snipers had been posted tactically and had to be silenced to make way for our infantry. To do this, our machine-gunners had to advance under fire into exposed positions and literally spray the trees with bullets. The battlefield is shown a few hours after the successful assault, but the grimness of the scene does not stop the souvenir-hunter from prowling. The trench, with its half-built pill-boxes, is not necessarily typical of the Jap defensive plan, as very seldom were these fortifications built in a like manner; a variation which created a feeling of uncertainty for our men when attacking.



**The Machine-Gunner** said, *"What the hell are you doing?"* as out of the corner of his eye he spotted my camera. *"Get down, you bloody fool. They've just got my cobber."* He swung his gun viciously across the treetops to revenge himself on the hidden Jap snipers.





# *Against an unseen enemy . . .*

**Our Casualties in New Guinea were Heavy** because the nature of the fighting was such that invariably our men had to go into battle standing up, while the Japs fought back from the safety of their jungle-covered pill-boxes and camouflaged positions.

The photographer took this picture lying down . . . bullets were flying fast as Diggers closed in on doomed Japs 30 yards away.



**A Jap Sniper Lies Dead**, with his neck broken, at the foot of a great coconut palm at Buna. Beside him is his smashed rifle. He had harassed our men and cost us lives until spotted by a Bren gunner with a grim sense of humour, who, with a stream of bullets, lopped the top right off the tree and brought the Jap to earth with a jolt.





## ARTILLERY DUEL FOR BUNA AIRFIELD

Jap stronghold on the north coast was Buna airfield. Here marine-manned 3-inch naval guns had to be taken at the bayonet point. Here, also, Australian-made field guns pounded the Japs as a preliminary to infantry attacks.

To locate the hidden Jap guns, R.A.A.F. pilots took crazy chances in Wirraways. They hovered for hours like hawks, telling what they saw over the radio telephone to our gun crews below, and then directing the gun fire with facts and wisecracks. One youngster buzzed his Wirraway only six feet from the ground along the entire length of the runway, flying through a hail of everything the Jap could throw at him, but he came back with what he went in to get—the low-down on their defences.

Soon these guns fell to our bayonets and their artillery observation post, built like a Tarzan hide-out in a huge tree, was taken over by our artillerymen. For days observers perched precariously aloft and directed our twenty-five pounders on to the last Jap bunkers, and so—Buna airfield fell.

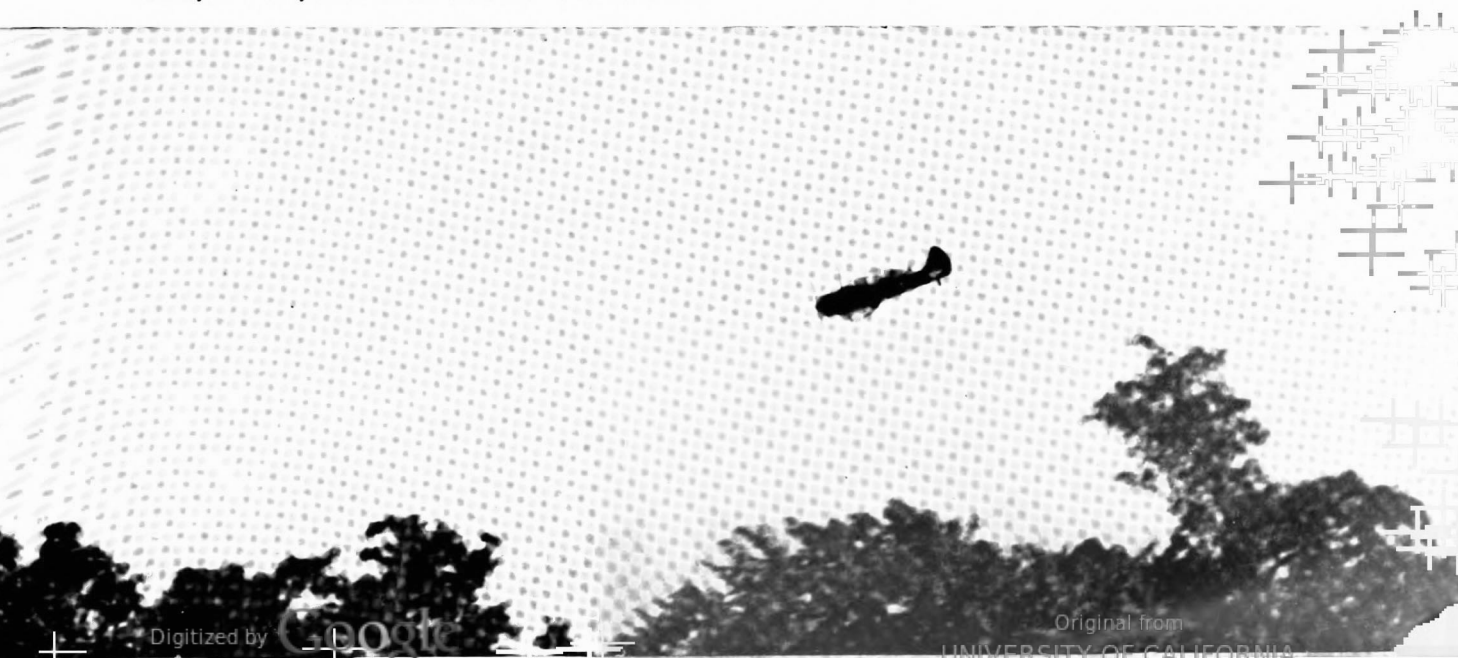


The Japs used this 3-inch naval gun for ack-ack, artillery and anti-tank work on the airstrip at Buna. It was finally captured by a company of Aussies at the bayonet point after much heavy fighting.



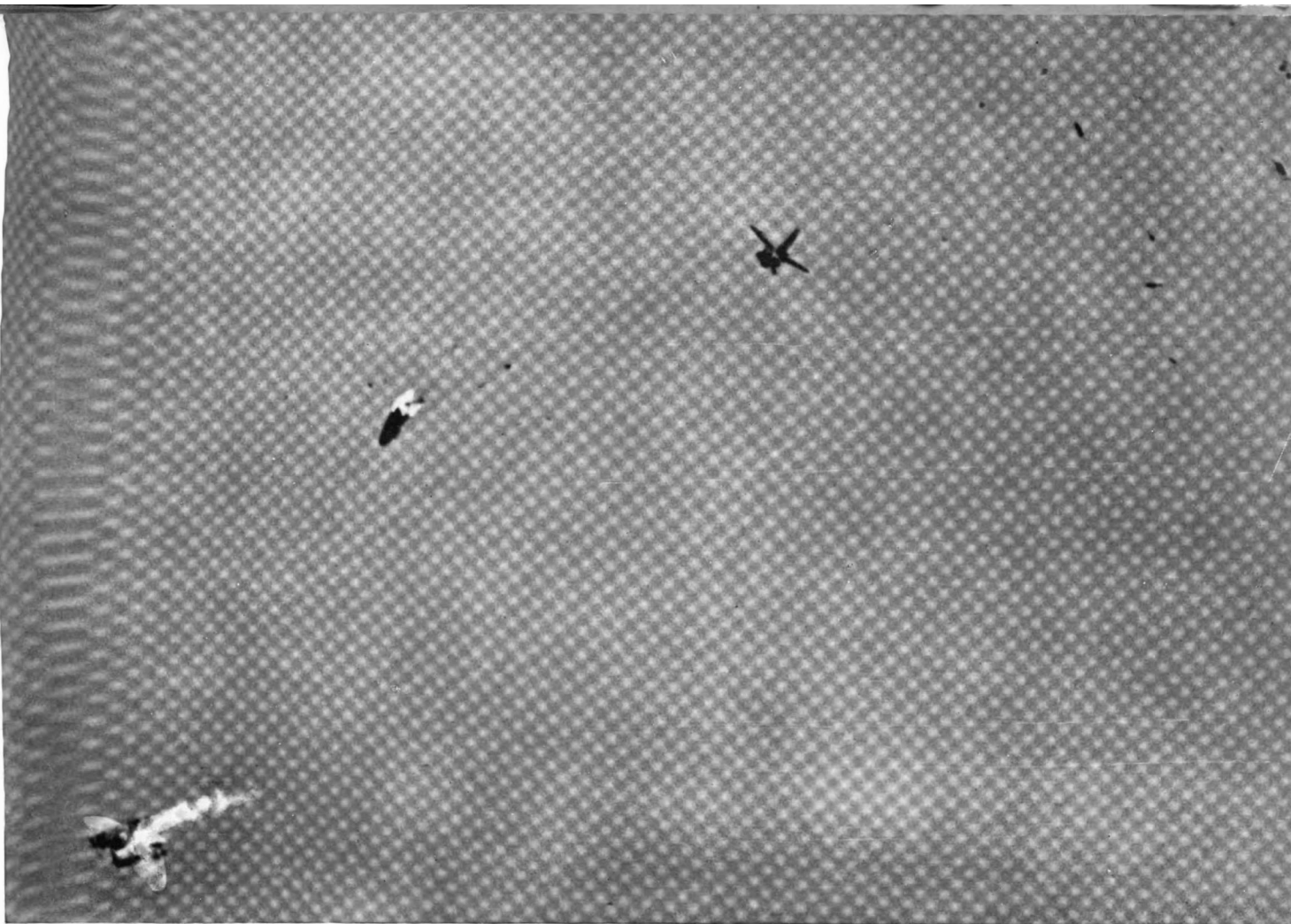
**Cunningly Camouflaged** in a huge Jap pill-box, this Australian-built 25-pounder fought out and won a duel with a Jap pom-pom gun across the airfield at Buna. Seventeen hundred yards separated them. An observation officer watches carefully for enemy movements while the crew open the side of the pill-box to allow the gun to bear on to its adversary.

**Wirraway versus Snipers.** In these treetops are Jap snipers—beneath them our troops attack pillboxes. R.A.A.F. Wirraways dive in again and again, guns rattling, bullets ripping the Japs from their hideouts. The communique for the day, reading "Our aircraft gave close support to troops," means more when one realises that often our men were merely 40 to 50 yards from the trees that had to be strafed.









**An R.A.A.F. Bomber is Blown to Bits** while low-level bombing over Gona. The blazing engines and wing can be seen in the bottom left corner, higher up is a portion of burning fuselage and the tail section, while in the top right corner pieces of the shattered aircraft tumble through the sky.

**“ONE OF OUR AIRCRAFT FAILED TO RETURN.”** Yet every day our air force roared into battle at suicidal heights across the tree tops at Gona. The pilots had a very real appreciation of the privations and dangers that the ground troops contended with twenty-four hours a day, and it was this realisation that made them feel that their “little bit” could never be big enough. While the infantry were making assault after assault on the Jap positions and the artillery and mortars were sorting out pill-boxes and bunkers for special attention, the air force ceaselessly bombed, strafed and carried out reconnaissance flights over enemy territory and, in their effort to drop bombs through the back entrances of the Jap pill-boxes, pilots roared in at extraordinarily low levels. Much depended upon the accuracy of their bombing, as the area into which they had to drop them was only 250 x 400 yards (approx.). Our own troops were often merely 40-80 yards from the Japs and seldom more than 100 yards—a near miss here meant disaster.



**Burning Zeros Cause Jungle Fires at Buna.** On this day 42 Jap bombers and fighters raided Buna sector; 19 were shot down by Allied airmen in Kittyhawks, Airacobras and Lightnings. This photograph was taken from the back seat of a Wirraway after the dog-fight.



**Yanks and Aussies** pose under the tail of a huge Jap bomber wrecked by Allied planes on Buna airfield. This bomber and the Zero opposite are but two of the nineteen aircraft found smashed when we occupied the airfield. All of these aircraft had been destroyed by Allied airmen during one day's operations at the time when the Japs first attempted to use the airfield as an operational base. Our blitz this day was so successful that the Japs were forced to keep their aircraft off this field and use strips further away.

Troops who have just arrived by plane cross a river on the way to the Sanananda front.

The only Digger in the Buna area to get a kiss for Christmas. He received it when this little white goat wandered unexpectedly into the front line on the airstrip.





**Tank Men examine a new type Zero Fighter** captured on the Buna airstrip; the main point of difference between this and the previous Zeros is the square wing tip. The wing and tail of this disabled aircraft show the accuracy of Allied strafing. The Japs use Roman figures for identification purposes: this is not peculiar to aircraft, as all their equipment is numbered in this way.

**SAL CORONA, A YOUNG AMERICAN PRIVATE, TAKES A BATH IN A BOMB CRATER ON BUNA AIRFIELD. JAP BULLETS WHISTLE OVERHEAD.**







**A Jap, Neck Deep in Water, Surrenders.** 'Four Japs had started a desperate swim for freedom; three were shot by the Digger, the fourth, with his hands up, is motioned shorewards. . . .



**The Jap comes in** towards the shore and lowers his hands. "Put your hands up," shouts the Aussie, and demonstrates what he means. . . .



**He Puts his Hands up** and reveals a grenade in his left hand. The Digger goes to the ready. . . .



**And Jumps up Shouting:** "Drop the bloody thing or I'll shoot!" The Jap's reply . . . he must have been crazy . . . was to fuse the grenade and . . .



**7.30 a.m., Cape Endaiaire** . . . Diggers with fixed bayonets charge through the jungle skirting the beach. A tank on the right moves slowly forward, its gun blasting every visible Jap position, while a few yards behind its bursting shells come men armed with bayonets, tommy guns and grenades. As they scramble through the undergrowth tommy gunners spray bullets and heave grenades into every thicket which may hide an enemy sniper; Jap trenches are revealed behind jungle camouflage, the men unhesitatingly jump in . . . with bayonets thrusting and lunging.

*(December 19th, 1942)*



**11 a.m., Cape Endaiaire** . . . three hours after the successful attack. It is hard to realise that so many of these pictures were taken on or near this peaceful-looking tropical beach, but the proof is clearly indicated below. The tracks made by the tank lead up the beach to the Cape, and the jungle through which the men in the above picture are charging can be seen on the left. The log on the water's edge is visible in the series showing the Jap with grenade, and only 100 yards from here is the spot where the tree was shot from under the Jap sniper.





**In a Jungle Clearing** during drizzling rain, Padre Lynch leads his men in divine service shortly before the attack on Gona; opportunities for service were rare, often months separated them.

The padres in this sector proved themselves as tough as the men with whom they walked on the gruelling three months' campaign across the Owen Stanleys and down to the coast. They helped with the wounded and cheered the weary with encouragement and hot tea. Padre Lynch, shown below, lost  $5\frac{1}{2}$  stone in weight during this time.





AUSTRALIAN FIGHTING MEN DECORATE WITH CORAL THE GRAVE OF A COMRADE WHO FELL AT GONA.



A JAP LIES DEAD BESIDE THE BULLET-RIDDLED TRUNK OF A PALM TREE

Original from

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA





*Photographer George Silk  
outside Gona.*

**THIS BOOK** is not meant to be a complete history of the Papuan campaign . . . but rather a record of one phase of it as seen by the factual camera of George Silk . . . a Dept. of Information photographer.

Silk covered the War in the Middle East for two years, being with the A.I.F. in the Western Desert, Greece, Syria and Tobruk.

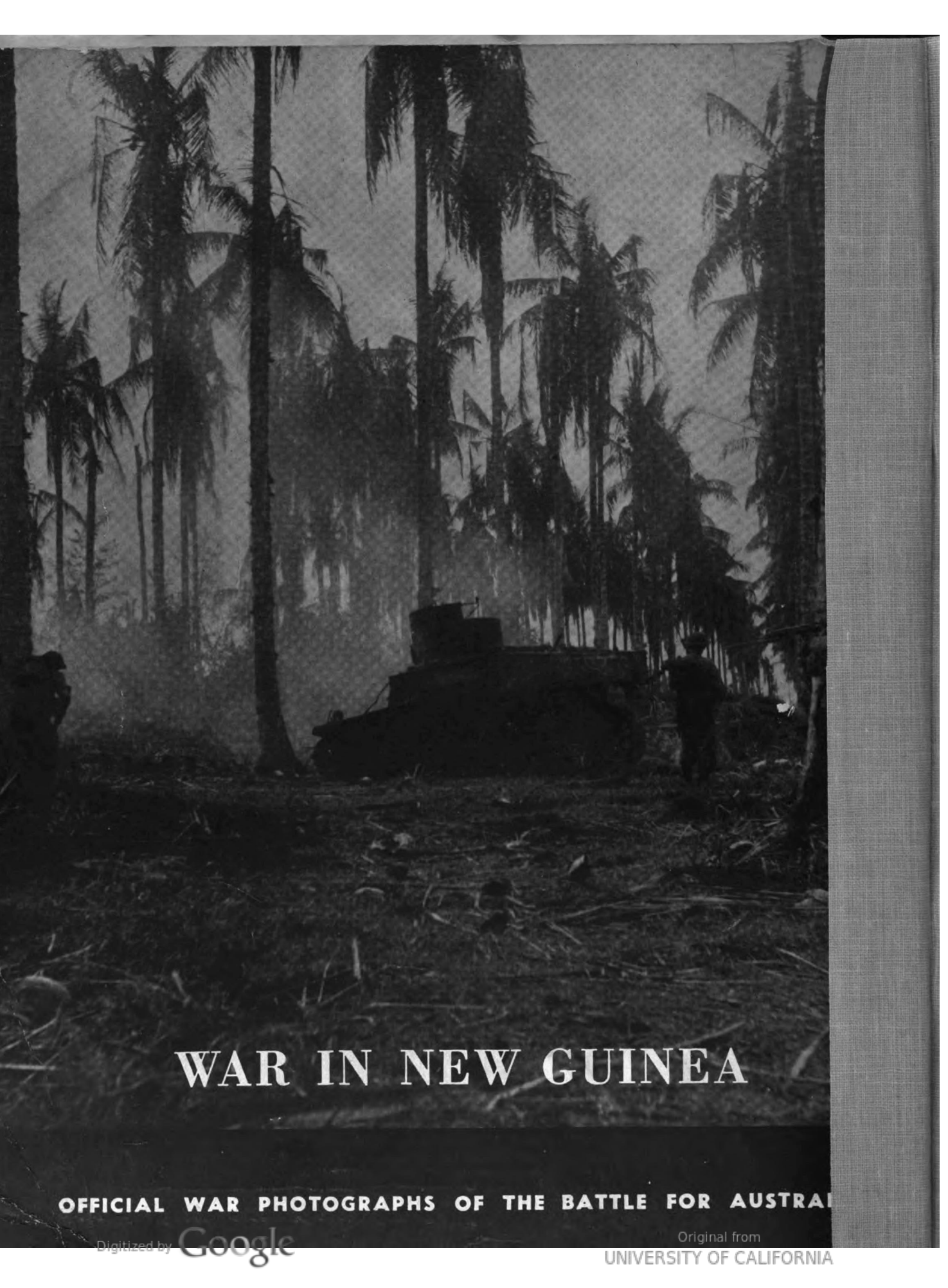
In New Guinea he joined the troops at Kokoda, and advanced with them to the coast. Walking over 700 miles, he photographed the fall of Gorari, Gona and Buna.

His pictures document the difficulties and hardships of the campaign and show . . . as no other evidence can . . . the story of Australia's struggle against Japanese aggression.

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# WAR IN NEW GUINEA

OFFICIAL WAR PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE BATTLE FOR AUSTRALIA

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